

REMARKS

This application has been reviewed in light of the Office Action dated June 13, 2007. Claims 1-3, 5, 6, 9-12, 15 and 18 are presented for examination, of which Claims 1, 6, 9, and 15 are in independent form. Claims 4, 7, 8, 13, 14, 16, 17 and 19 have been canceled, without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter. Claims 1-3, 5, 6, 9-12 and 15 have been amended to define still more clearly what Applicants regard as their invention. Favorable reconsideration is requested. The canceled claims will not be further addressed herein.

Claims 1, 2, 9 and 10 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,434,569 (Toshimitsu) in view of U.S. Application Publication No. 2002/0072417 (Kudo).

Claims 3 and 12 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Toshimitsu, in view of U.S. Application Publication No. 2002/0099569 (Thirsk).

Claim 5 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Toshimitsu, in view of Thirsk, and in further view of U.S. Application Publication No. 2003/0055317 (Taniguchi).

Claims 6, 15 and 18 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Toshimitsu, in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,235,510 (Yamada).

Claim 11 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Toshimitsu in view Kudo, and in further view of Taniguchi.

As shown above, Applicants have amended independent Claims 1, 6, 9 and 15 in terms that more clearly define what they regard as their invention. Applicants submit that these

amended independent claims, together with the remaining claims dependent thereon, are patentably distinct from the cited prior art for at least the following reasons.

Claim 1 is directed to a medical image handling system including a) a monitor for displaying a medical image; b) an input device for inputting an image reading report corresponding to the medical image displayed on the monitor; and c) a processor configured to process a control of judging presence or absence of the image reading report corresponding to the medical image displayed on the monitor and restricting a change of displaying the medical image, in case the image reading report is judged absent.

Toshimitsu relates to a medical information system for managing and displaying medical information, such as charts and reading reports. The system includes a terminal device 12 which is accessed by a doctor and connected to a hospital information system (HIS) and a picture archive and communication system (PACS). The HIS includes an examination ordering system, an accounting system, a specimen examination system for storing a result of a specimen examination, a medicine system for managing a medicine given to a patient, chart managing system, etc. The HIS system receives orders and results of the examinations and manages data of biochemical examinations, reading reports, etc. Each examination is identified by an examination ID.

In column 7, lines 40-57, Toshimitsu discusses that an HIS terminal device retrieves an examination list to select the examination ID to be displayed, and that the HIS terminal device can determine whether or not the reading report is present. However, Applicants have found nothing in Toshimitsu that would teach or suggest “a processor configured to process a control of judging presence or absence of the image reading report corresponding to the medical

image displayed on said monitor and restricting a change of displaying the medical image, in case the image reading report is judged absent,” as recited in Claim 1.

Kudo does not remedy the deficiencies of Toshimitsu. First, Kudo relates to an method for displaying an image for a video game device, not a medical image handling system. In paragraph [0012], Kudo discusses restricting the changing of background images from the start until the completion of a predetermined particular operational mode of a plurality of operational modes. In particular, when the operational mode is the fighting mode and a player character enters a “scene to scene” boundary region, then the scene is not switched and the background image remains the same even if the player character moves further in the leftward direction on the screen. This, however, has nothing to do with restricting a change of displaying a medical image. Thus, Applicants have found nothing in Kudo that would teach or suggest “a processor configured to process a control of judging presence or absence of the image reading report corresponding to the medical image displayed on said monitor and restricting a change of displaying the medical image, in case the image reading report is judged absent,” as recited in Claim 1.

Accordingly, Applicants submit that Claim 1 is patentable over Toshimitsu and Kudo, whether considered separately or in any permissible combination (if any).

A review of the other art, including Thirsk, Taniguchi, Yamada and Coffin, of record has failed to reveal anything which, in Applicants’ opinion, would remedy the deficiencies of the art discussed above, as a reference against Claim 1.

Claim 6 is directed to a medical image handling system including: a) a monitor for displaying a medical image; b) an input device for inputting an image reading report

corresponding to the medical image displayed on said monitor; and c) a processor configured to process a control of judging presence or absence of the image reading report corresponding to the displayed medical image and inputting an image reading report which is set to no observation instead of the input device, in case the image reading report is judged absent and the medical image displayed on the monitor is changed, or in case a predetermined time is elapsed.

For substantially the same reasons set forth above with respect to Claim 1, Applicants have found nothing in Toshimitsu that would teach or suggest “a processor configured to process a control of judging presence or absence of the image reading report corresponding to the displayed medical image and inputting an image reading report which is set to no observation instead of the input device, in case the image reading report is judged absent and the medical image displayed on the monitor is changed, or in case a predetermined time is elapsed,” as recited in Claim 6.

Yamada does not remedy the deficiencies of Toshimitsu. Yamada relates to a picture archive communication system for storing and transferring digital image data in one or more hospitals. Column 18, lines 43-46, cited in the Office Action, merely discloses outputting a computer-aided diagnosis (CAD) result. However, Applicants have found nothing in Yamada that would teach or suggest “a processor configured to process a control of judging presence or absence of an the image reading report corresponding to the displayed medical image and inputting an image reading report **which is set to no observation** instead of the input device, in case the image reading report is judged absent and the medical image displayed on the monitor is changed, or in case a predetermined time is elapsed,” as recited in Claim 6 (emphasis added).

Accordingly, Applicants submit that Claim 6 is patentable over Toshimitsu and

Yamada, whether considered separately or in any permissible combination (if any).

A review of the other art, including Thirsk, Taniguchi, Kudo and Coffin, of record has failed to reveal anything which, in Applicants' opinion, would remedy the deficiencies of the art discussed above, as a reference against Claim 6.

Independent Claims 9 and 15 are method claims corresponding to apparatus Claims 1 and 6, respectively, and are believed to be patentable over the cited prior art for at least the same reasons as discussed above in connection with Claims 1 and 6.

The other claims in this application are each dependent from one or another of the independent claims discussed above and are therefore believed patentable for the same reasons. Since each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, the individual reconsideration of the patentability of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request favorable reconsideration and early passage to issue of the present application.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our New York office by telephone at (212) 218-2100. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

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FCBS_WS 1572578v1